NUMB. VI.

The LAY-MONK.

Ac veluti magno in populo cum ſæpe coorta eſt
Seditio, ſævitq; animis ignobile vulgus,
Jamq; faces & ſaxa volant, furor arma miniſtrat:
Tum pietate gravem ac meritis ſi forte virum quem
Conſpexere, ſilent, arrectiſq; auribus adſtant.
Ille regit dictis animos, & pectora mulcet. Virg.

FRIDAY, *November* 27. 1713.

IT is almoſt impoſſible for a Man to go out of the common Road of Life, or to appear in the World with any Singularity, without incurring a thouſand Cenſures. A new Suit Cloaths made out of the Faſhion, tho' ever ſo nvenient, ſhall expoſe the Perſon that wears it, be follow'd thro' the Streets for a Madman. I member, when I was newly return'd from my ravels, I had my Lodgings ſearch'd, and was in e Cuſtody of a Meſſenger for two Days; the Occaſion of it was, that ſome honeſt Citizens at a offee-houſe, which I frequented, cou'd not diſver my Name, or Emp oyment, but took No-e, that I often call'd for Pen Ink and Paper, and in a Back-Room by my ſelf, writing; at other imes, I have been ſuſpected for a Popiſh Prieſt, ly becauſe I wore a black Wig, had a thought-l Look, and could ſpeak *Latin*.

Since our ſettling in our new-form'd Society, it not to be imagin'd what a Number of Reports ve been rais'd concerning us. Whether our inter, who often attended us for about a Week fore the publiſhing of theſe Papers, had been der Examination, and unwarily diſcover'd the ce of our Reſidence, or by whatever Means we re firſt traced out, it is certain that the Name the *Lay-Monaſtery* has been for ſome Time ſpread oad in the Neighbourhood, and has occaſion'd umerable Speculations.

The Houſe in which we live has nothing in remarkable, excepting that it is ſaid to have been formerly the Seat of a Prior. But it is uſual now for Gentlemen, as they are riding by in Company, to ſtop, and point up to it, as if in that Place there were ſomething extraordinary. The People that bring Proviſions from the neighbouring Markets ask a thouſand odd Queſtions of our Servants: We never paſs in nor out, but we find Spies at every Corner of the Houſe; and Sir. EUSTACE has over-heard them ſaying ſoftly to one another, as he walk'd under the Trees before his Door ----- *There goes the* Lay-Monk.

Some of our zealous but ignorant Neighbours are afraid that we are Plotters againſt the Government, and that we have taken a whimſical Name, to conceal ſome dark Deſign: Others have heard, that we have a *Chymiſt* among us, and give it out, that the Houſe is turn'd into an Elaboratory, and that we are employ'd in a Project for diſcovering the Philoſopher's Stone; a Juſtice of the Peace, within half a Mile of us, goes deeper, and has found out that we are a Knot of *Jeſuits*; who, he believes, act by Commiſſion from the *Pope*, and are ſettling a Plan for the recovering of the *Abby-Lands*: But others, who have ſeen ſeveral Hampers of Wine brought into the Houſe, report, with more Charity, That we are a Set of jolly Fellows, and good Companions, come hither on Purpoſe to keep our *Chriſtmas*; only they perceive we intend to begin it a Month ſooner than the reſt of the Pariſh, and are reſolv'd to live as well as if we were *Monks* indeed.

Theſe

These various Gueſſes and Suſpicions had for ſome Time afforded much Diverſion to the Society, till NED FREEMAN returning Home from one of his Morning Rambles, the very Day that our firſt Paper was publiſh'd, call'd out haſtily for Sir EUSTACE; and upon our asking what was the Matter, told us, *We were all blown up. You have made a fine Hand on't*, ſays he, *with your* Lay-Convent! PYTHAGOREAN, *you muſt get ready for another Tranſmigration: In ſhort, we muſt all turn out; for I can tell you, our Hive will be ſmoak'd.* He concluded his Raillery, with informing us that the next Day was Queen *Elizabeth*'s Birth-Day, and that we were to expect a Viſit from the Mob.

NED's Intelligence carry'd ſo much Probability in it, that it was by no Means to be deſpis'd. We therefore took the Alarm, and conſider'd in what Manner we ſhould prepare to withſtand the Aſſault. There was no Time to be loſt: I immediately propos'd that we ſhould provide a Pope and a Bonfire, as the moſt likely Means to ſecure us in this Extremity; as Travellers light Fires in a Wood, when they are afraid of being ſet upon by wild Beaſts. This was agreed to. We diſpatch'd a Servant in all Haſte to Town to procure ſome Part of the Equipage; and NED FREEMAN's Wardrobe being ſearch'd, furniſh'd us very commodiouſly with a rich Maſquerading Habit, which made up the reſt, and which we thought cou'd not be employ'd on a better Occaſion.

The next Day our Proteſtant Friends came ſomewhat earlier than we expected. The Houſe was now beſet, and Stones began to fly in at the Windows, when Sir ARTHUR WIMBLETON ſlipping out at the Back-Door of the Garden, mingled with the Croud, and taking their Leader by the Hand, ſaid, he had an honeſt Countenance, and his Zeal was good; but do you conſider, ſays he, what you are doing? The Fellow was going to return a rough Anſwer, when Sir ARTHUR begg'd their Silence for a Moment. There is an obliging Condeſcenſion in this Gentleman's Manner of Speaking, which ſeldom fails to gain him Attention. *My good Friends*, ſaid he, *let me tell you a fooliſh Story of my ſelf. When I had the Honour to lead a Troop of Horſe to join the Prince of* Orange *at his Landing*, (tho' by the way the Knight was not then in *England*) *as we were marching to* Exeter, *we were overtaken by another Party of Horſe on the Road; we were ſo full of Courage, and ſo hearty in the Cauſe, that without asking who they were, we immediately fir'd upon 'em; but upon Enquiry we found they were Friends, and that they were going upon the ſame Deſign with us.* Sir ARTHUR ended his Speech, by telling them frankly, that he was one of our Society, and that we were all good Church-men, and in the Intereſt of the Proteſtant Succeſſion; that Mr. FREEMAN, one of our Number, was a Member of the *Hanover*-Club; that himſelf had narrowly eſcap'd the *Inquiſition* in *Italy*, for telling unlucky Stories of their Prieſts; and that, to ſum up all in a Word, we had provided a Pope, and a Barrel of good Liquor to make them welcome, and to conclude the Solemnity of the Day. The Name of the *Lay-Monaſtery* was ſtill a Difficulty with them; but Sir ARTHUR got over that as well as he cou'd, by referring them to a Paſſage in the *Book of Martyrs*; he had forgot the Page, but ſuppos'd they had all read it in the Pariſh-Church, and they might depend upon it, the Word *Lay-Monaſtery* had a very innocent Meaning, and ſignify'd in Reality no Monaſtery at all.

The Tumult was now pretty well abated, when to perform what Sir ARTHUR had ſtipulated for us, we produc'd our Pope and our Barrel of Ale. This ſoon brought us to a right Underſtanding. A Bonfire was immediately rais'd and lighted before the *Lay-Convent*; and, in ſhort, every Thing concluded peaceably, and to our mutual Satisfaction.

The next Day the Society came to the following Reſolutions.

Order'd,

That the Thanks of this Fraternity be given to Sir ARTHUR WIMBLETON *for his prudent Conduct, by which he has ſav'd the* Lay-Monaſtery *from being plunder'd.*

That every Member of the Society do immediately repair to the Juſtice of the Peace, who was pleaſed to reflect upon us, and before him take th' Oaths of Abjuration, *and of* Allegiance *and* Supremacy.

That the further Part of the old Garden-Wall, on which, to the Road-ſide, there is the Form of a Croſs in Blue Brick, be taken down, and rebuilt without any ſuch Figure.

And, *That the Fraternity conſider, at their next Sitting, of inviting ſome Perſon of ſufficient Merit, Years and Authority, to be* Viſitor *to the* Lay-Convent.

This Paper will come out every Monday, Wedneſday *and* Friday, *and may be had at Mr.* Harriſon's *by the* Royal Exchange; *Mrs.* Dodd's *and Mrs.* Boulter's *without* Temple-Bar; *and Mrs.* Bond's *at* Charing-Croſs.

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